



About Your Biopsy

Once a breast lump or breast abnormality has been detected, your doctor may want to perform a breast biopsy

What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is currently the only way to achieve an accurate diagnosis. A percutaneous (through the skin) biopsy uses a needle to remove cells (Fine needle aspiration) or pieces of tissue (Core biopsy). Approximately 1 million breast biopsies are performed every year; 80% of them are benign.

There are four types of biopsies that can be performed:

Ultrasound guided fine needle aspiration

Ultrasound guided core biopsy

Stereotactic core biopsy

MR guided core biopsy

A biopsy does not deform the breast. It causes minimal to no scarring. Complications, such as hematoma (bruising) and infection are rare, occurring in less than 1 in 1000.

Percutaneous biopsy has been proven to be 95.8% accurate in making a diagnosis. medications

Your doctor and the radiologist will determine the type of biopsy you need, based on the abnormality seen

The Biopsy Procedure

The biopsy will be performed by the breast imaging staff. A radiologist, nurse practitioner, and technologist will work together throughout the procedure. Since this is a teaching institution, there may be residents and fellows (doctors undergoing specialty training) in the room.

How long does it take?

The actual biopsy takes less than one hour, but you may be spending approximately 3 hours in the radiology department. A lot of time will be spent in preparing you and the equipment for the biopsy.

How should I prepare?

Most needle biopsy procedures don't require any preparation on your part. You do have to stop taking blood-thinning medications, such as aspirin or Coumadin (warfarin) 5 days before your biopsy. If you take Coumadin, you may need a blood test to check your clotting before the biopsy. The doctor will give you special instructions if you are on blood thinners. Contact your primary care physician before the biopsy if you have any further questions.

Inform the doctor ahead of time if you have any strong allergic reactions to medications, if you take a blood thinner, or if you need antibiotics before any dental work.

What happens during the biopsy?

You will need to remove all clothing and jewelry in the area to be examined and wear a gown during the procedure. Depending on the type of biopsy you are having, you will be positioned by the technologist and some images will be obtained. A staff member will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign the consent form. This is a great time to ask any questions of the breast imaging staff.

The procedure is performed using local anesthesia. **You will be awake, so we can talk to you throughout the procedure.** You will have to remain still during the procedure and it is important to get comfortable before the procedure starts. When you receive the local anesthetic to numb the skin, you will feel a slight pin prick from the needle and experience some tingling. You will be numb quickly. It is normal to feel some pressure when the biopsy needle is inserted. Depending on the type of biopsy, you may hear some "clicks" as the biopsy is obtained.

For some biopsies, a metal marker called a "clip" may be placed in your breast after the biopsy to mark the spot where the cells or tissue were removed. The clip is made of titanium and is shown to be safe and harmless. It does not interfere with airport security devices or with any X-rays you have in the future. It is very small and you will not be able to feel it. You may need a mammogram after the biopsy to check the position of the clip.

Breast Imaging Center

Appointment Scheduling

617-667-2515

Will I feel any pain?

Most patients feel little or no pain during the procedure. You may feel some pressure during the procedure and you may also experience some discomfort and bruising after the biopsy. Some tenderness may remain for a few days following the biopsy.

What happens after?

- Use ice and Tylenol for any pain. Avoid Aspirin and Ibuprofen such as Motrin, Advil, Aleve, etc. for 2 days. (Check with your doctor if you take Aspirin or Coumadin regularly.)
- You can shower the following day. Avoid baths and hot tubs.
- Wear and sleep with a soft bra for 24-36 hours
- You can resume normal activities immediately, but do not lift anything heavy and abstain from strenuous physical activity for at least 24 hours.

Quick Tips

- Do not wear deodorant or lotions on the day of your procedure
- Wear a 2 piece outfit that is easy to change out of
- Bring or wear a soft bra or sports bra
- You will be able to drive or take public transportation after the procedure, but you may still consider bringing someone with you
- On average, the actual procedure will take about 40 minutes but be prepared to be here for 2-3 hours
- If you do not hear from your health care provider with results within one week, please call your doctor's office



Further Information

617- 667-2503

if you have questions regarding scheduling

Questions & Concerns

Please contact our nurse practitioner at

617- 667-1626

if you have any medical questions or concerns regarding the biopsy

As with any procedure, there is a small possibility that your biopsy may not be performed due to unpredictable technical limitations.

What about the results?

Results will be available after 5-6 business days.

The person who referred you for the procedure will share the results with you.



This information was prepared by the Breast Imaging section at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

For further information, please visit us on our new website: www.bidmc.org

Click to navigate to Center and Departments/Radiology/Exams/Breast Imaging/Procedures